

a CHRISTIAN Community

No Matter What One's Creed
May Be, Torrance Churches
Will Welcome the Stranger



• Symbolical of Christian Faith, This Cross Stands In Proximity to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.

● TORRANCE . . . on Review

No sites for churches included in original plans; permitting settlers free rein in forming groups and selecting locations.

Most Torrance churches began as missions or from tent meetings.

First in city was probably predecessor of present First Baptist church, closely followed by Church of the Nativity (Catholic).

At present at least 12 churches have regular meeting places.

American Legion hall and first Torrance theater have served as places of worship.

Organizations within the churches minister to needs of all groups.

ory at 1447 Engracia avenue the next year.

Following Father Riordan the pastorate has been filled by Fathers Panner, Sheehy, Hurley and the present incumbent, Father Kennedy, who has been in charge since October, 1932.

Organizations in the church include the Altar society, with Mrs. William Neff as president; Holy Name society, under J. V. Murray, and Young Ladies' sodality, led by Edna Mullin.

Central Evangelical Church

CENTRAL Evangelical church dates its work from October 27, 1916, when the Rev. J. P. Ash conducted services in the theater and later in a home on Gramercy avenue. The congregation was officially organized March 1, 1917, and construction of a church was begun later in the same year, at Marcelina and Arlington avenues. In 1920 the manse was erected, followed in 1923 by the Guild hall.

Pastors since the Rev. Ash have been the Rev. George Stieglitz, in 1917; the Rev. G. A. Streit, in 1918; the Rev. E. L. Weatherwax, in 1919-20; the Rev. F. A. Zeller, from 1921 to 1927; the Rev. G. G. Schmid, 1927-31; the Rev. O. D. Wonder, 1931-36; the Rev. E. W. Matz has just been assigned to the charge, beginning his pastorate June 15, 1936.

George W. McKenzie is president of the board of trustees, with Mrs. J. S. Lancaster, vice president; E. Merle Johnston, secretary; F. C. Winkler, treasurer, and D. A. McCormick, representative of the board to the congregation. Mrs. Julia Neeland is choir director, with Thomas Ulrich as pianist.

W. E. Bowen has been superintendent of the Sunday school for nearly 12 years, presiding over the senior group, with Mrs. J. E. Winter in charge of the juniors and Mrs. W. E. Bowen for the beginners.

Church organizations include the Ladies' Guild, with Mrs. W. J. Neelands as president; Christian Endeavor, with Mrs. Karl Pisel as superintendent; and Woman's Missionary society, Mrs. O. D. Wonder, president.

St. Andrew's Church

ST. ANDREW'S Episcopal church dates from 1919, when the Rev. Robert Rennison, acting as missionary, held the first services. It has grown from a tiny beginning until today it owns its beautiful edifice at 1432 Engracia avenue.

Organizations in the church include the Woman's auxiliary, Mrs. George Evans, president; St. Cecilia's guild, Mrs. Fred Quaggin, president; the Ham 'n Egg club, with Dr. G. P. Shidler as temporary chairman, and the choir, with Mme. Teala Billini as organist and director.

WHEN Torrance was founded it was, in one respect, like a heathen country. For there were no churches.

Not that churches were not desired in the new community—far from it. But in preparing an industrial city it was impractical to determine how many of the new residents would be of a given faith. A church planned for a congregation of 200 might have but 20 followers, while another might reverse this situation and find allotted quarters hopelessly undersized.

With the belief that this was a problem for the settlers to determine in their own fashion, no church structures were provided but it was not long until missions made their appearance in the city.

Torrance Mission

FIRST of these was the predecessor of the present First Baptist Church, for it is said that with the first settlers J. Hamilton came from the City Rescue Mission of Los Angeles and actually built the present edifice, although it was then located at the corner of Cabrillo avenue and 220th street.

The building was then called Torrance mission, and the Rev. Eldridge was sent by the mission board as its first pastor, following Mr. Hamilton. He was in charge until 1916, when the Rev. J. W. C. Swan organized the Community Baptist church with 50 members.

Since that time the pastorate has been held by the Rev. Jones, who died during the influenza epidemic; the Rev. A. Griewe, the Rev. Thorpe, the Rev. J. W. Green, the Rev. C. Hedrick, the Rev. J. Speed, and the Rev. C. M. Northrup, who has been here since June 1, 1935.

First Baptist Church

DURING the pastorate of the Rev. Thorpe the First Baptist church was organized and the building moved to its present site, at Carson street and Martina avenue. New Sunday school rooms were added, and improvements since have included purchase of the parsonage, at 1827

Andreo avenue; enlargement of the church, Sunday school and parsonage, and redecoration and refurnishing of all.

Church organizations include the Sunday school, of which William H. Tolson is superintendent; the Woman's Missionary organization, with Mrs. Maude Hocott as president; the Men's Brotherhood, A. R. Craig, president; the Senior Young People's group, with Arthur Graham as president, and the Intermediate and Junior groups, sponsored by Mrs. C. M. Northrup and R. Farquhar.

Catholic Mission

FOLLOWING shortly after the establishment of the Torrance Mission the first Catholic mass in Torrance was celebrated by Father Powers of Gardena in 1913 in a bungalow at 1739 Gramercy avenue. Weekly trips were made to Torrance by Father Powers to minister to the four Catholic families in the new community.

Some time later, after Father Fuhr had succeeded Father Powers at Gardena (and Torrance) the bungalow was sold, necessitating removal of the headquarters to another rented bungalow, across the street.

But this new location, too, suffered the fate of being sold, so when Mr. Probert, manager of the Torrance motion picture theater on El Prado, offered its use for services it was gladly accepted.

During the next few years the headquarters of the church moved to the school on Cabrillo avenue, and later to an empty store at Cabrillo and Carson, while Father Conneally, of Redondo Beach, had taken the mission under his wing.

Church of the Nativity

IN 1921 Father Dennihan, who had succeeded Father Conneally, supervised the construction of the church edifice on Cota avenue at Manuel, and in 1923 the Most Reverend Bishop Cantwell appointed a resident pastor for the new parish, dedicating it as the Church of the Nativity. This was Father Riordan, who added the rect-



• First Baptist Church.



• Central Evangelical Church.



• St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.



• First Church of Christ, Scientist.